# STAR TREK III: RETURN TO GENESIS

Story by Harve Bennett

September 16, 1982

September 16, 1982

# STAR TREK III: RETURN TO GENESIS

Story by Harve Bennett

Black. In the darkness the wind whistles and the black gives way to a blinding sun. It is the sun of the Genesis planet. The credits roll. We make our transition, as we once did before, to the primordial surface. As the credits end, we see the photon torpedo canister -- "Mark IV" -- containing the remains of Spock. Now the transition up and back, but as we pull back to the star field surrounding the new planet, a discordant and ominous sound and feeling overtakes us. Then -- is it an apparition? -- No. A giant Romulan Bird of Prey slowly comes to visibility -- it's "cloaking" device is highly sophisticated, compared to earlier Romulan versions.

On the Romulan bridge: The Commander is a handsome, swarthy man with a dignity reminiscent of the 20th Century actor Omar Sharif. Like all Romulans, he is physically similar to Vulcans, his brother race. The sharp pointed ears...the tilted brows. But unlike the more highly evolved Vulcan civilization, cool and dedicated to logic, the Romulan is of blood and passion. His mission is intelligence. He is Captain of a spy ship, deep in enemy territory.

"Cloaking device disengaged -- we are visable", the chatter on the bridge begins. "Estimate 15 parsecs into Federation territory -- they don't know we're here." "Approaching the uncharted planet, Commander." "Scanning." "Report." "Indeterminite life signs, Commander." The Romulan Commander is intrigued. "Landing party stand by. We'll beam down."

On the lush Genesis planet, the Romulans immediately

make a miraculous discovery. Their scanners indicate unlimited deposits of raw dilithium (the 23rd Century equivilent of plutonium). The implications of this discovery are not lost on the Commander. But before he can savor this triumph, he is summoned to another part of the forest, where some of his men, guided by light radioactivity readings, have discovered Spock's sarcophogus. After determining it is safe to approach, the Commander orders it opened.

The tube is empty.

* * *

The U.S.S. Enterprise is en route home. Admiral Kirk's log informs us of all we need to know: that he has deposited Dr. Carol Marcus and her son (and his), David, back in their laboratory to continue their work on the project Genesis. The log also notes concern by the Admiral over the morale of his ship, particularly that of the ship's doctor, Leonard "Bones" McCoy, whose depression has become acute.

On the bridge, we see Kirk, himself, has problems. He has had no response from Starfleet Command on his handling of the Genesis matter, and he is obsessed over what Genesis may have unleashed upon the universe. Above all, he has lost Spock. These things he confides to Sulu, who calms him. Perhaps an hour of rest would do Kirk good. Kirk agrees.

It is therefore somewhat shocking to James T. Kirk when the pneumatic hiss allows him to enter his quarters only to find his trainee First Officer, the beautiful

Saavik. There is a brief, awkward moment. Kirk is caught off guard. He tries to regain his command composure, stating he is certain there is some regulation which applies to this situation, but he's not sure which one it is. Saavik immediately supplies the regulation. But Kirk says, "Never mind. Why are you here?"

Saavik begins to tremble, blaming her half Romulan side. She didn't know who to turn to. Soon she is close to tears. Kirk moves in to comfort her. "What is it?" he says. "I've seen Spock," she replies. Kirk tries to keep his composure, as she explains the visitation, and her belief that Spock is alive. But his attempts to console her are interrupted by Scotty summoning him to sick bay. "Hurry", Scotty says.

Scotty's concern is Bones McCoy, who is sitting in the empty sick bay, drunk as a skunk. Scotty leaves. The conversation between Kirk and Bones is funny at first, until Bones' passion begins to pour out. He believes he killed Spock. He believes there was more to be done -- more he should have known. What's more, he is haunted by a memory he can't reach -- something Spock told him that he cannot remember. Kirk is much more severe with Bones. Bones has a job to do, and he damn well better pull himself together, and stop languishing in senseless guilt. Bones says it's not guilt, but ignorance that is destroying him. He begs Kirk to take him to Vulcan. He must find out the truth. Kirk softens. He'll think about it.

Bones is alone now. He does try to pull himself together. He splashes water on his face, looks up into the mirror. There he sees Spock. Whirling with a cry, he faces an empty room. He looks back into the mirror

only to see his own anguished face.

Kirk is on the bridge, when an urgent compic comes in. On screen, Starfleet Commander wants him back, best speed. Kirk requests permission to make a brief stop at Vulcan. Permission is denied. "I don't want you going near Vulcan." Kirk complies. Transmission out. Then, after a moment of thought, he orders Sulu to lay in a course for Vulcan.

* * *

On the Genesis Planet, the Romulan Commander is setting up mining operations. He is in communication with his ship, being run by his formidable female Sub-Commander. Even as the first mining labor begins, a series of wierd sounds commence. They are unlike anything we have ever heard. Then they stop. The Romulan crew, superstitious by nature, is spooked by this. Their tough Commander gets them back to work.

* * *

Enterprise is in parking orbit at the planet Vulcan. Repeated attempts to establish communication produce no results. Kirk, McCoy and Saavik beam down.

The Vulcan surface seems deserted, until the attack suddenly comes. They are surrounded by a band of very hostile Vulcans, shouting their rage. Kirk turns to Saavik, demanding to know what's going on. Saavik doesn't know -- this is her first visit to Vulcan. The hostiles attack with classic Vulcan two-headed axes, and things are going very badly, when help comes. It is in the commanding presence of Prime Minister Sarek, Spock's

father, and a well-armed group of Vulcan Regulars. The hostiles are siezed, but Sarek is far from hospitable. "This is all your doing", he spits at James T. Kirk.

Later, in his quarters, the atmosphere is quite different. Vulcan tea is being served, and Vulcan cool again prevails. Still, Sarek's passion underlies. The Genesis device and the death of Spock have shaken his civilization. The implications of universal Armageddon, caused by the Federation, have proved how fragile the centuries of Vulcan evolution is. Young Vulcans will not accept their fate being in the hands of the intellectually inferior Federation. A rebellion has shaken his society, and long dead war-like traits have surfaced. Sarek, named Prime Minister as a peace-maker, is hanging on by his fingernails.

And perhaps he, too, has succumbed to anger. "But why you?" asks Kirk. "Because", says Sarek, "you abandoned my son." Kirk's protests only enrage Sarek. He accuses Kirk -- and McCoy -- of criminal ignorance. "Why was Spock's body not returned to me? What makes you think he was 'in death'? How dare you presume, with your primitive science, to understand Vulcan physiology and the Vulcan ways!" In short , says Sarek, Spock might have been in a transcendental state -- a state in which he may still be.

Kirk is overwhelmed by Sarek. "What can I do?" "Find him, and bring him to me," says Sarek. "And hope that I am still here when you return."

Later, outside Sarek's quarters, Kirk is ready to be beamed back to Enterprise when McCoy requests permission

to stay behind. There is too much he has to learn, and he is certain now that Spock had planted information in his brain that he must discover. Kirk reminds him that if Sarek's fears about the rebellion are valid, Bones could be in great danger. "I'll catch up with you later", says McCoy.

* * *

A Federation Light Cruiser is approaching Genesis. The Captain's log tells us it is on a data gathering mission for Project Genesis. They are proceeding without any suspicion. The Romulan Sub-Commander requests instructions from her chief, on the planet. He orders her to engage the cloaking device. She warns him the dilithium power for cloaking is limited. "Then you will have to attack quickly", says the Commander.

The battle is short and terrifying. The Romulan vessel becomes visable (in order to fire) on the screen of the doomed reconnaissance ship. Last minute commands are of no avail. And the Light Cruiser explodes in a barrage of Romulan photon torpedos. The Sub-Commander notes, with some satisfaction, that there were no survivors, and no distress signal. "Good", says the Commander. "Maintain sub-space radio silence."

* * *

Even as Enterprise is docking, the command shuttle approaches. With appropriate ceremony, Commander, Starfleet is piped aboard. As the Enterprise crew salutes, he dispenses with formalities. He'll see Kirk in Kirk's quarters, immediately.

The Starfleet Commander is pissed. Not only has Kirk mishandled the entire Genesis affair, but he has also disobeyed a direct order. Any hope of ameliorating Kirk's behavior with the Federation council (which he sincerely would like to do) has been dashed by Kirk's rash behavior. Kirk admits to the insubordination, but he's baffled by the larger problem. His superior explains, somewhat more kindly now, that the mess is political. The detonation of the Genesis device has triggered inter-gallactic rage and fear. The Vulcan problem is but one of many. The Romulan and Klingon Ambassadors are demanding instant parity of Genesis devices. And so on, and so forth, and whether Jim did the right thing or not is immaterial. He will be the scapegoat, as a series of delicate negotiations begin. And the only way we can save Jim's skin, within the fleet, is to have some credible explanation of why he disobeyed a direct order. "Help me, Jim", he says. Kirk now levels with him. He tells him how he has come to believe that Spock could be alive, and that the most important thing is to allow him to return to Genesis immediately. Kirk is so impassioned he does not perceive his commander slowly stiffening at this tale. And then, the worst happens: Kirk sees Spock sitting there, in his quarters. "Thank God", says Kirk, "Now you'll understand... See him there!" Commander, Starfleet does not see Spock, but he does see his duty. In a kindly way, he relieves James Kirk of command, and remands him to quarters for help. The crew of the Enterprise will be reassigned and someone else will lead the mission back to Genesis.

In the torpedo room of Enterprise, Kirk bids farewell to the Enterprise family. All have been reassigned, but none will be returning to Genesis. Kirk keeps his dignity. But with the others, something is churning within them all.

* * *

Kirk is alone in his San Francisco apartment; foghorns and the sound of cable cars below. He opens the door simply to verify that the two Starfleet guards are there. They are. He settles down with his half-glasses to read. As he starts to read Spock's gift, he looks up from the book, peers over his glasses, and sees Spock sitting in his room. The reaction is quietly rational. "Why are you doing this to me?" Spock does not answer. "This is one hell of a mess you've got us all in, and the least you could do is talk to me." But nothing works. And Kirk is alone with growing fears about his sanity, when he receives a visitor.

It is Sulu, with special permission to drop in. As Kirk confesses, and says he may indeed be going mad, Sulu's behavior is quite odd. He walks about the room, checking plants, objects, and looking behind picture frames, even as he casually fills Kirk in on the disposition of his crew. Scotty has been named Chief Engineer on U.S.S. Excelsior, which boasts the newest hyper-warp engines, capable of speeds far in excess of warp 10. Uhura has been named dispatcher at the Space Shuttle dock, a menial task, but one which she requested. Sulu, himself, will command Enterprise with Saavik and Chekov by his side. And so on, and so forth. "For God's sake, Sulu, sit down", says an exasperated Kirk. "Certainly, Admiral", Sulu says, checking the last possible hiding place for a bug. Then he turns to Kirk, a burst of energy. "Let's go", he says, "We're busting you out of here. When Kirk protests that Sulu and the others are placing themselves in jeopardy, Sulu says, "It doesn't matter." When Kirk says, "What if I <u>am</u> mad?" Sulu assures him: "You're not mad. I have seen him too. We've all seen him."

The guards present only a brief problem. Sulu calls one in, and renders him unconscious, with aikido. Kirk is impressed, and handles the second guard himself. "Where are we going?" he says, spirits rising. Sulu grins. "To the space shuttle -- by way of the old city."

In a series of scenes, where each of the Enterprise family participates, a great escape is perpetrated. Sulu and Kirk, in the "old quarter" of San Francisco, travel on a cable car, even as Uhura prepares the way, at the space shuttle center. While this is happening, the guards are waking up in Kirk's apartment. And by the time Kirk and Sulu and the others artfully slide past guards into the space shuttle, and begin their journey, Commander, Starfleet, is being awakened, in his quarters. But the shuttle docks at Enterprise, and the escapees are greeted by Saavik and Chekov. A handful of crew, at best, but enough to get away. And where is Scotty? "Momentarily", says Sulu, "He's the key to this." Prepare to cast off.

The Captain of the Excelsior, sleeping in his quarters, is awakened by Commander, Starfleet, who can hardly be understood in his rage. Commander of Excelsior is one of those unpleasant Starfleet types. "Don't worry, sir, Excelsior will stop them."

Enterprise clears space dock. Kirk is concerned about Scotty. Sulu assures him, "He ought to be coming aboard -- about now, sir." Scotty materializes in the transporter room, and beats a path to the Enterprise bridge. "Glad to be with ye, sir", he says with pride. Kirk points out that they have but a skeleton crew. Scotty grins. He has the old girl on full automatic. Kirk warns his friends that they are committing an act of mutiny. The response is, "Long live Spock, sir."

Kirk nods. "Full impulse power", and Enterprise moves out.

* * *

U.S.S. Excelsior is picking up speed. On the bridge, her Captain spots Enterprise. "Lock on target and pursue." Kirk's reaction is dispairing. Excelsior has the newest of engines and can overhaul them. Scotty advises warp 8, and Kirk wonders "What's the use?" "Trust me, sir", says Scotty. And Enterprise bangs into warp speed. The Captain of Excelsior responds with some contempt, and orders "Warp 15." As the order is complied with, a series of unearthly sounds eminate from the U.S.S. Excelsior. Within seconds, the red-faced Captain's ship has burped and wheezed it's way to a stop. "There's nothing", exclaims Scotty on the bridge of the Enterprise, "that a few well-placed pieces of chewing gum won't do to a hyper-warp engine." And the Enterprise is warping it's way to Genesis.

* * *

The mining operation on Genesis has been plagued by a series of inexplicable minor disasters. Scanning devices have been stolen in the middle of the night, and Romulans have mysteriously disappeared. The soldiers have become to believe in a ghost-like figure, and the Romulan Commander has been hard-pressed to keep discipline. In spite of this, mining operations have matured, and are comtinuing when the scream comes from "out there". The Romulan Commander and armed men rush to investigate. They find a hysterical Romulan whose discovered the body of a missing comrade. The neck has been broken. The Commander rolls the body over, picks up an object from underneath. "There is no ghost here." In his

hand is a Starfleet belt buckle.

* * *

Enterprise is getting close to Genesis, when sensors indicate a vessel in the quadrant. The vessel is identified as Vulcan, and when no response is received, Kirk calls Red Alert. His worst fears are that it is a Vulcan rebel, and they may have a fight on their hands. But as they come within phaser distance, a message in Vulcan is translated by Saavik. "They want coordinates to our transporter room" Kirk nods, and moments later McCoy materializes aboard the U.S.S. Enterprise. "You took your sweet time about it," he says.

On the Genesis planet, the Romulan commander has patrols out, searching for the "ghost" amid odd sounds and rumbles on the planet. The officer next to the commander is suddenly jerked into the air by a hidden booby trap among the trees. "Get him down" rages the Romulan, even as his communicator buzzes to life. "Federation starship approaching!" The Commander orders "cloaking". The Sub-Commander expresses her deep concern. "This is the last amount of power available for invisibility." "Do it", he barks.

The Enterprise approaches, unsuspecting, like the other victim of the Romulan ship. They are distracted by two disturbing readings: mineral scan indicates heavy presence of dilithium on the planet; even stranger, multiple life signs indicating scattered habitation. "What the hell's down there?" wonders Kirk.

"I cannot maintain cloaking device much longer!" reports the Sub-Commander. "Kill them."

Enterprise is preparing to energize its transporters, when the first warning signs occur at Chekov's console. Remembering past irregularities, he snaps to Saavik, "By the book, Mr. Saavik, Yellow Alert." Aboard the Romulan Bird, the cloaking is becoming irregular. "Phaser lock." The Romulan Bird appears on Enterprise's viewscreen. Red Alert. Energize defense fields. Volleys and returns even as the Romulan target phases in and out of visibility, frustrating gunner Chekov. When the Romulan Bird next appears, it is too late for Enterprise to evade. A mortal volley is received. Scotty says there is no damage repair crew -- no way to continue. Kirk recognizes he is outmanned. Quickly, he barks orders: "Uhura, signal surrender -- Mr. Saavik, execute General Order III -- Mr. Scott, feed all power to transporter room." When they hesitate, he barks "Now! Set timers at five minutes."

Moments later, the crew of the U.S.S. Enterprise, led by James T. Kirk, materializes on the Genesis planet. When Saavik expresses her fear that the battle has been lost, she gets a Kirkian reply, "The battle has just been joined. In exactly three minutes, it will enter phase two."

The Romulan Sub-Commander requests permission to board the surrendered vessel. Her commander grants the request with pleasure, and adds "Don't take any prisoners." The Sub-Commander smiles. "I'll send everyone I have, sir." Aboard the deserted Enterprise, a hoard of Romulans materialize, poking about, searching the bridge and the corridors. We intercut mysterious close-ups of Kirk counting down: 1 minute...30 seconds...15seconds.

At 5 seconds, by Kirk's count, one of the Romulans

discovers a blinking console, which we saw activated by Saavik. "What is this?" he wonders, as we cut to space and the U.S.S. Enterprise blows herself to smithereines.

On the Genesis Planet, a weary, ragged, smoke-covered group of survivors from the Enterprise watch with grief as their mother ship becomes a hot glow in the distant sky. It is a moment of horror and wonder for them. The same moment for the Romulan Commander creates insane rage. Most of his crew have been tricked into death. He rages at the Sub-Commander, still on her bridge, and stops only when she says, "Federation survivors appear to have beamed down." The Romulan Commander vows his vengeance, even as ominous rumblings from the planet reach a new, wierd level.

* * *

It is night on the Genesis Planet. The exhausted crew of the Enterprise huddles in a protected place, but alone and defenseless. Sentries are posted, as a gesture. Tricorders indicate the presence of many life forms, and a few phasers will not be enough. There are brief conversations among the Enterprise family. And between Kirk and Saavik, a rare moment. When he says that there are always possibilities, and another card to play, she tells him there is no need for bravado now. There is no simulator to reprogram. The ship is lost, Spock is an illusion, and she has always loved Jim Kirk. There is nothing else to say. Jim Kirk holds her tight.

* * *

With first light, amid ominous rumblings of the

Genesis Planet, Kirk and McCoy leave the others to reconnoiter. Shortly thereafter, as the planet groans and seems to moan in pain, they discover the dilithium mine. Instantly they recognize the entire, awsome threat that Genesis has brought to the Federation. Dilithium in unlimited quantities in the hands of the Romulans means --- but the thoughts are incomplete. The Romulan Commander stands behind them, inviting them to join the other prisoners.

* * *

The Enterprise crew are bound and waiting in the Romulan camp. And Kirk leaves McCoy to go to his confrontation with the enemy commander.

The elegant Romulan is playing for very big stakes. Any uncertainties about his intentions are clarified in his meeting with Kirk, because both men know what the game is. Mined dilithium crystals mean hyper-extended use of the Romulan cloaking device. Romulan ships could range throughout the galaxies, maintaining invisibility until they are ready to surprise their victims. The end result: intergallactic invincibility. From the Romulan's point of view, it is the personal coup of all time. But there is one more piece of information he needs, and Kirk might as well help him, since the game is up. How was this uncharted planet formed? What is the secret of creating new planets with unlimited dilithium deposits? Kirk responds philosophically, and historically. Once, he says, it was gold. Again, it was spices. Then it was oil. Why do civilizations destron themselves over resources which should be shared? "Do not philosphize with me, my friend. I come from a culture where sharing is not a way of life...You will tell me what I

want to know, or I will extract it slowly from each member of your crew, ending with you. And I will let you live one more night, so that you can contemplate the terror of an incorrect decision. Good night, Admiral."

The Romulan Commander has made only one psychological error. He has, during the preceding scene, been playing with an object in his hand -- something like worry beads. At the end of his speech, with calculated theatricality, he reveals the object. It is the Federation belt buckle. It's impact on Kirk is to revive his reason for being on the Genesis Planet.

* * *

Deep into the night, the prisoners are bound and sleeping fitfully. The Romulans, including guards, are asleep, except for one sentry, to whom we now move close. A pair of hands suddenly engulf his shoulders and chin and break his neck with a snap.

Saavik is asleep. We move to a close-up. Sensing something, her eyes open. A "Shoosh" keeps her from crying out. Close, we see her bonds being cut. Back to her face, close. A voice whispers instructions in the Vulcan language. White-eyed, she stares and nods, as foot steps recede off screen.

Within moments, Saavik has freed the others and, in silence, they follow her out of the enemy camp.

Saavik continues to lead the Enterprise group through the primeval forest, through the dark. She will not allow questions. She reaches the cathedral-like place in the primordial forest. Then, concentrating as noises

of the planet sound around her, she closes her eyes and points. All eyes go in that direction. In the distance, backlit by an eerie light, amid the growls of the strange land, stands what appears to be Spock.

They approach, slowly at first. And then, as possibility overtakes doubt, they begin to hurry forward toward the figure, breaking into incredible joy, until they are within twenty feet of the figure, and they are stopped abruptly by an animal-like roar.

Spock is bearded, ragged, and half mad. He is the primeval Vulcan, or worse; half Vulcan, half beast. Yet, as they perceive him, he is a being in turmoil: sanity versus madness, logic versus passion, Jekyll versus Hyde. The conflict between what he was and what he has become seems ongoing. When Kirk approaches in wonder, calling his name, Spock barks an answer hoarsely, "You. You left me here to die." Entreaties will not do it. Spock offers a curse to them and the Romulans alike. "Plunderers", he cries, "Monsters. I will kill you all."

McCoy starts forward. Kirk tries to stop him. McCoy shoves him aside with unexpected strength. "Get back, Jim. You don't know what the hell you're doing, but I do." He starts forward, beginning a series of monumental insults to the raging Spock-beast. "You green-blooded idiot, how dare you turn on all your friends? You think I don't know what lurks under your cool, calm nonsense all these years! You animal -- You're mine, all mine --."

And so saying, "Bones" McCoy walks directly into the death grip of a raging Spock, who has become a snarling

being. His bear hug seems to be crushing the life out of McCoy, when suddenly McCoy raises his arm and plunges a secreted hypodermic into Spock.

"You green-blooded son of a bitch - I read the book."

Spock falls away from McCoy into a heavy-breathing coma, as the others rush up in wonder. A terrible rumbling begins, and the earth starts to tremble.

The rumbling is becoming a cataclysmic quake. The Romulans awaken in their camp, with cries and terror. Their Commander, amid the chaos, sees that the prisoners are gone. He commandeers a few good men with weapons and sets out in pursuit amid the quaking.

Aboard the Romulan vessel, the Sub-Commander, getting quake readings and other unexplainable phenomenon, begins calling desperately to her people below. "What's happening? Do you need assistance?"

Spock is still comatose. The earth is opening. Trees are falling. The Genesis eden is becoming a hell.

Amid the madness, the Romulan Commander, phaser drawn, relentlessly pursues his quarry, even as his companions are felled around him by crashing trees.

Saavik hears the Romulan Sub-Commander on the radio. She's found their frequency. "Patch in!" cries Kirk, as rocks and debris fall about them.

The Romulan Commander presses forward to the edge of the forest, alone now.

Over the communicator, the Sub-Commander cries, "Shall I beam you up?" Kirk grabs the communicator, hollers hoarsely, "Yes, on this transmission, beam us up!? A moment of hesitation, "Who is this?"

The Romulan Commander comes to a clearing and seek Kirk.

"Do it, danm you" cries Kirk.

The Romulan Commander raises his weapon -- but it is too late. The Enterprise group, huddled together, simultaneously dematerialize in the beam.

In the transporter room, the Enterprise group materializes and fans out. To their surprise, the corridors are empty. The ship is almost deserted.

Below, the Romulan commander fumbles for his communicator; tries to contact his aide, but --

The bridge to the Romulan ship opens, and the Enterprise crew finds the Sub-Commander alone. When she reaches for her phaser, Saavik gets to one first. A moment of horror, then Kirk takes charge. Amid mutterings of "How do you work this God damned thing" and assisted by his friends, Kirk finds the transmission device. "Kirk to Romulan Commander, come in." The Romulan answers. Kirk puts it all together. "You asked me a question, I'll tell you the answer. The planet was created by a reformation device. The process took six minutes. Logic suggests that that which is created in six minutes is on an accelerated curve to its own destruction. I offer you a chance to get out alive."

"Don't be a fool", says the proud Romulan.

Kirk makes his best offer. "You are a spy and a criminal. But I offer you your life and prisoner or war status for you and your men."

Kirk's reply is static. He whirls to Mr. Scott. "Can you get us out of here?" Scotty doesn't understand Romulan labels, but as we intercut with the rumbling planet, he finds the combination. The Bird of Prey roars to life and streaks away from the Genesis Planet, which is, with ILM's help, going to implode itself into a black hole.

* * *

The Bird of Prey is headed toward Earth, or so the Captain's log informs us. Spock is under the care of McCoy and gives signs of coming around. We are all hoping for the best. On the bridge, there is light banter about the peculiarities of the strange vessel. With all going well, Kirk decides to go below to sick bay. "Mr. Sulu, take command. Mr. Saavik", he adds -- "Will you take a ride with me?" Saavik accompanies Kirk into the Romulan elevator.

As they descend, it is Kirk who stops the elevator. "Mr. Saavik, there is something I'd like to say to you. I'm not sure how to begin." Saavik smiles. "Self-expression has never been one of your problems, Admiral." But it is now. Kirk seems inarticulate. Saavik helps him. "When we were on the planet, the rules were changed. But the rules are back now." "And you've always played by the rules, Saavik." "Always, Admiral." Then, she adds, "And you've always bent them." Kirk shrugs his boyish agreement, then presses the down button.

In sick bay, Spock is coming to consciousness. McCoy watches over him. As Spock's eyes open, he is insulted by McCoy -- and responds pithily. Then Kirk enters. He goes to Spock. Their few words are interrupted by Uhura's voice. "Federation Starship is in our quadrant. It's the Excelsior, sir. They are threatening to open fire. What do we do, sir?"

"Just do the logical thing, Uhura. Surrender."

Kirk and Spock alone. "They'll make you pay a price for this, Jim. A court martial for sure." "I know. I've already figured my plea, nolo contrende, and I'll throw mywelf on the mercy of the court. With any luck, they'll bust me down to Captain and send me out again." "In a new Enterprise", adds Spock. "I hope so", says Kirk. There's a moment, then Spock says, "Jim...", and Kirk looks up, "Yes?" "Thank you for coming back for me."

As the Bird of Prey heads for home, we

FADE OUT.